

March 19, 2010

News Release

For Immediate Release

Jefferson City, Missouri

Three individuals with strong ties to Columbia were selected for induction into the second class of the Missouri Recreation and Parks Hall of Fame. The presentation took place during the 2010 Missouri Park and Recreation Association's annual conference held at Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach, Mo held earlier in March.

Richard L.Green, Glenn A. Gillespie and C. Randal Vessell were recognized for their extensive efforts on behalf of the parks and recreation profession.

Green served as Director for Columbia's Parks and Recreation Department for 30 years until his retirement in 1998. During this time, he was instrumental in overseeing Columbia's significant growth, including a doubling of the number of parks, acquisition of federal monies and in earning the National Park and Recreation's Gold Medal Award for Excellence in 1984. He also guided legislative efforts in enabling a local option ½ cent sales tax for funding local parks and recreation services. This has resulted in well over 100 cities and counties approving tax initiatives generating over two billion dollars for parks and recreation services in Missouri.

Dr. Glenn Gillespie was a professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and went on to serve as Chairman of the Department of Recreation and Park Administration, and later as Assistant Dean of the College of Public and Community Services. Gillespie was especially skilled in economics, research and political action. He worked tirelessly at the local, state and national levels to promote the success of students, professionals and outdoor initiatives.

Randy Vessell also served at the University of Missouri-Columbia, first as an Assistant Professor for over 31 years until his retirement in 1992. He was named chair of the Department in 1992, where he administered a nationally accredited academic department offering both undergraduate and graduate degrees along with significant missions for teaching, research and outreach. He had great impact on the recognition of therapeutic recreation and advocacy of enhanced funding sources. As

a mentor to thousands of students, he also received numerous awards for his dedication to the parks and recreation profession.

All three of these men were active in the Missouri Park and Recreation Association, advocating for professionalism among all practitioners and the value of the services provided to Missouri citizens. They were among seven individuals recognized for “outstanding, unique, lasting and extraordinary contributions to the recreation and parks movement in Missouri.”

Richard Green and Randy Vessell were present to receive their awards. Dr. Gillespie, who passed away in 2007, was represented by his family. The awards are on display at the Missouri Park and Recreation office, located in the Musco Lighting Building in Jefferson City. For additional information, go to www.mopark.org.

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